

Empathy as a Powerful Leadership Tool

Presented by Janis Glenn, Action Learning Coach for VISTA Leaders

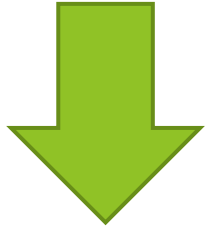
Friday, March 16, 2018

janisglenn@pathways-llc.com

Agenda



- ▶ Definition and Overview of Empathy
- ▶ Empathy as an Emotional Intelligence Competency
- ▶ Empathy as Key to Leadership Performance
- ▶ Strengthen your Empathy
- ▶ Your experiences of empathy and how it impacted your work
- ▶ Connection vs. Control
- ▶ Take away...
- ▶ Resources



Empathy defined...

- ▶ Empathy is the ability to experience and relate to the thoughts, emotions, or experience of others.
- ▶ Empathy is more than simple sympathy, which is being able to understand and support others with compassion or sensitivity.

Emotional Intelligence

El at work is the capacity for.....

- ▶ **Self-Awareness** - recognizing your feelings and behaviors
- ▶ **Self-Management** - managing your feelings and behaviors, and staying motivated in spite of setbacks and obstacles
- ▶ **Social Awareness** - understanding what others feel
- ▶ **Relationship Management** - building rapport and collaborating with others

The Competency of Empathy



I think we all have empathy. We may not have enough courage to display it.

Maya Angelou

All advocacy is, at its core, an exercise in empathy. Samantha Power

The Competency of Empathy

- ▶ Understanding is as important as being understood
- ▶ Listening is as important as being listened to
- ▶ Other people's ideas are as important as your ideas
- ▶ Giving respect is as important as receiving it

The Competency of Empathy

Building Bridges

YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- ▶ Your view of the situation
- ▶ Your perspective
- ▶ Your needs
- ▶ Your feelings
- ▶ Your behaviors

THEIR UNDERSTANDING

Their view of the situation

Their perspective

Their needs

Their feelings

Their behaviors

The Competency of Empathy

If you want to influence people.....

- ❑ you need to understand empathically the power of their point of view
- ❑ to feel the emotional force with which they believe it

Test Your Emotional Intelligence/Empathy

- ▶ Great leaders *move us*—they inspire, motivate, and energize us. How? They do it through emotional intelligence.
- ▶ www.haygroup.com/Quizzes/en-us/Emotional-Intelligence-Quiz.aspx



Sampling of EI Quiz

- ▶ I understand the reasons for my feelings.
- ▶ I understand how other people's experiences affect their feelings, thoughts, and behavior.
- ▶ I understand my leadership strengths and weaknesses.
- ▶ I see people as good and well-intentioned
- ▶ I can describe my feelings in detail, beyond just "happy," "sad," "angry," and so on.
- ▶ I manage stress well
- ▶ I focus on opportunities rather than obstacles



Sampling of EI Quiz continued....

- ▶ I'm calm in the face of pressure or emotional turmoil.
- ▶ I feel hopeful.
- ▶ I control my impulses.
- ▶ I'm optimistic in the face of challenging circumstances.
- ▶ I use strong emotions, such as anger, fear, and joy, appropriately and for the good of others.

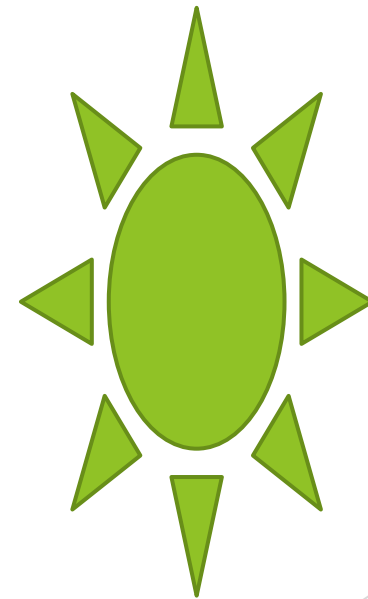
Strategies to Strengthen Empathy

Effective Listening

Encouraging Words

Body Language

Reflect Back

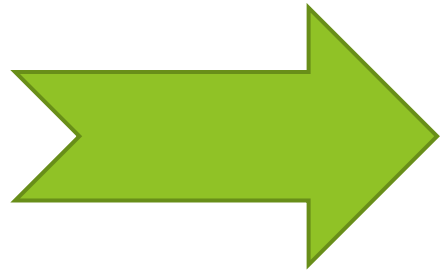


Strengthen your Capacity to Empathize

- ▶ **Be quiet, inside and out.** The more you can quiet your chattering brain, the more you can hear your emotional wisdom. Meditation is a good practice. You can also tune in through stopping your activity and focusing on your breath.
- ▶ **Fully watch as well as listen.** Getting absorbed in another's life story strengthens the connections between your cognitive and emotional brain.

Strengthen your Capacity to Empathize

- ▶ **Ask yourself what you are feeling.** If many of your emotions are in part a reflection of what another person is feeling, practicing "**emotional awareness**" on yourself will help you empathize when you are with others.
- ▶ **Identify where in your body your emotions appear.** Where do you feel fear -in your chest, your throat, or in the back of your neck? Where do you feel anger--in your stomach, your jaw, or in your clenched fists? How about betrayal?



Leadership Shift

- ▶ The nature of leadership is shifting, placing a greater emphasis on building and maintaining relationships.
- ▶ Leaders today need to be more person- focused and be able to work with those not just in the next cubicle, but also with those in other buildings, or other countries

Connection vs. Control

- ▶ The pull of **connecting** to others and their interests is far **more powerful** than the **push of control**, especially when we find the intersection between their interests and our goals.



Empathy is critical skill for effective leadership for one, simple reason – trust.

When you show that you are aware of your staff's feelings and appreciate those feelings, even when you don't agree with them, it builds trust.

Research: Center for Creative Leadership

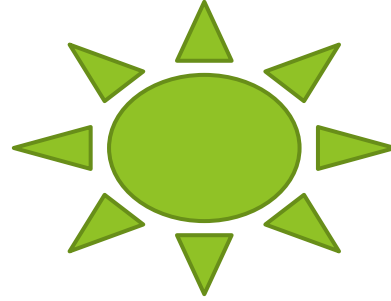
CCL analyzed data from 6,731 managers from 38 countries. Key findings of the study are:

- Empathy is positively related to job performance

Strategies to Strengthen Empathy

- ▶ **Deeply understand** your own needs and interests: Go beneath the surface to unearth what you *really* want and why.
- ▶ **Become the other.** See through their eyes, think with their mind; sense its patterns. Consider what is truly in their interests.
- ▶ **Go from there.** Show how your idea is in their interests, either directly or through an exchange you offer.

Strategies to Strengthen Empathy



► ASK GREAT QUESTIONS

To listen and practice empathy, we have to ask great questions of ourselves and others.

RESULTS of Increasing Empathy and other EI Competencies

- ▶ **lower stress**
- ▶ **help you achieve higher career achievement**
- ▶ **and have greater satisfaction in relationships**

How To Begin...

- ▶ Start small and expand
- ▶ Be open and curious
- ▶ Unlearn old emotional patterns and learn new ones
- ▶ When you fail, practice self-compassion, learn, and move on
- ▶ Cultivate awareness and observation, noticing, and mindfulness in yourself and those around you
- ▶ Practice being in the moment
- ▶ Practice loving kindness, compassion, gratitude, and appreciation

Resources

- ▶ *Change your Questions; Change Your Life* by Marilee Adams
- ▶ *Option B*, Sheryl Sandburg and Adam Smith
- ▶ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/>
- ▶ www.CenterforCreativeLeadership.com
- ▶ *Daring Greatly* by Brene Brown
- ▶ *Greater Good* University of California, Berkeley
- ▶ *Working with Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman

Quote On Empathy

Neil deGrasse Tyson

- ▶ Humans aren't as good as we should be in our capacity to empathize with feelings and thoughts of others, be they humans or other animals on Earth. So part of our formal education should be training in empathy. Imagine how different the world would be if, in fact, there was 'reading, writing, arithmetic, empathy.'